(b) if so, what are the names of States in which the Excise duty is exempted and upto what period the facility is provided; and

(c) what steps are being taken by Government to prevent the exodus of pharmaceutical companies from other States to these States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Area-based excise duty exemptions are applicable to specified units located in the North-East Region, Sikkim, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttaranchal and Himachal Pradesh and Kutch district of Gujarat. Except for Kutch, in all other cases, the exemption is available for a period of 10 years from the date of start of commercial production. In case of Kutch, it is for five years from the date of start of commercial production.

(c) Having taken into account all material factors, no change in the above exemption schemes is under consideration of the Government at present.

Waiver of agricultural loans by Karnataka

2627. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that State Government of Karnataka are considering proposals to waive the agricultural loans lent to farmers who committed suicide due to crop failure;

(b) what are the details in this regard;

(c) whether the Central Government would examine the scheme and adopt the same for the whole country to provide relief to the families of farmers who committed suicide in other States such as Andhra Pradesh; and

(d) what is the likely financial implication involved, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.